

Original Article

Evaluation/determination of dispensing pattern of psychoactive agents in Karachi

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Objective

To investigate the dispensing behavior of antipsychotics in retail pharmacy practice and to assess the attitude of pharmacist towards dispensing of these drugs without prescription and evaluating the causes of their malpractice in Karachi. A questionnaire was given consisting of 10 questions, emphasizing on dispensing patterns of antipsychotics with or without prescriber's guidance or prescription. The total 150 individuals male and female both between age group 19-45 years are selected ,the data is collected and statistical calculation shows that there are number of individuals who are using psychoactive without prescription, either prescribed by doctor but not showing prescription at the time of dispensing, taking self medication or by the advice of store keeper. Mostly these patients have taken antipsychotics prescribed by the doctor once and after getting positive effects they are taking medicines without doctor's consultation and without prescription. Some of patients have faced harmful effects and stop taking these medicines. From 150 sample size, we found that Almost all pharmacists handed out the antipsychotics immediately of the population,78 % are using psychoactive agents while 30% are taking self medications,70% are taking with prescriber's advice54% store keepers dispensed medicines without demanding prescription while 46% claimed for prescription. The study also showed that the use of antipsychotics is highest among females. Total 36% males and 74% females are using psychoactive agents. 12.1% of patients said that dispensing should not be without prescription and 83.73% of patient agree about the use of these agents with physician's prescription. The study confirmed that pharmacists are dispensing psychoactive agents without prescription and not only violating the law, which is leading to a profound malpractice in retail pharmacies around the city but also contribute toward the factors which leads to adverse drug effects. The antipsychotics list should be generated, implemented, and monitored by high authorities.

Introduction

Malpractice is a type of negligence that may arise from a professional's misconduct or failure to use adequate levels of care and further failing to follow generally accepted professional standards. Antipsychotic drugs are increasingly being prescribed to senior citizens to treat symptoms of dementia. The antipsychotic drugs are used for treating schizophrenia and bipolar disorder and also have proven effective in the treatment of dementia in which symptoms including such as agitation/aggression but most research have only focused on their use for up to twelve weeks (1). A psychoactive drug, or psychotropic is a chemical substance that crosses the blood-brain barrier and acts primarily upon the central nervous system where it affects brain function, resulting in alterations in perception, mood, consciousness, cognition, and behavior (2).

In Pakistan most of the drug store keepers dispense psychoactive agents without knowing the details and without demanding for prescription as our survey is Karachi based so we have conduct study and realize that the situations is more worse then we assumed.

Methodology

Research is carried out in Number of individuals who were visited randomly in a premises of Karachi covering north nazimabad, f.b area, gulshan, water pump, defence, steeltown, malir. The total 150 individuals male and female both between age group 19-45 yrs. are selected ,the data is collected and statistical calculation shows that there are number of individuals who are using psychoactive without prescription, either prescribed by doctor but not showing prescription at the time of dispensing, taking self medication or by the advice of store keeper.

Mostly these patients have taken antipsychotics prescribed by the doctor once and after getting positive effects they are taking medicines without doctor's consultation and without prescription. Some of patients have faced harmful effects and stop taking these medicines. The most prescribed medicine was xanas, alp (alparazolam) use to treat anxiety. A health-related point of view or comprehensive reason involved the response that it is not good for your health to sell you this medication.

Major tranquilizers as well as antidepressant agents have been associated with clinical seizures in patients administered these agents. The incidence of such seizures is generally low when these drugs are administered in therapeutic doses. However, administration of large doses of these agents has been associated with many cases of convulsion production.

Results

A total of 150 patients were randomly included in this study. Almost all pharmacists handed out the antipsychotics immediately of the population, 78 % are using psychoactive agents. While 30% are taking

self medications, 70% are taking with prescriber's advice. 54% store keepers dispensed medicines without demanding prescription while 46% claimed for prescription. The study also showed that the use of antipsychotics was highest among females. 36% males and 74% females are using psychoactive agents. 12.1% of patients said that dispensing should not be without prescription and 83.73% of patient agrees about the use of these agents with physician's prescription. The study also showed that the use of antipsychotics was highest among females.

Discussion

When it came to Antipsychotics, results show that almost all pharmacists handed out the antipsychotics immediately, of the population, 78 % are using psychoactive agents while 30% are taking self medications, 70% are taking with prescriber's advice. 54% store keepers dispensed medicines without demanding prescription while 46% claimed for prescription. The study also showed that the use of antipsychotics was highest among females. 36% males and 74% females are using psychoactive agents.

Store keeper dispensing simply by following the collaborator's request without even asking for a doctor's prescription. 12.1% of patients said that dispensing should not be without prescription and 83.73% of patient agree about the use of these agents with physician's prescription. The study also showed that the use of antipsychotics was highest among females results are given in figure 1-4.

Xanax is approved by the US-FDA for the treatment of major depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, bulimia nervosa and panic disorders. Despite that, antidepressants can increase the risk of suicidal thinking and behavior in children. Patients of all ages who are started on antidepressants or those taking a new dose should be monitored closely for clinical adverse effects. That being said, pharmacists never asked whether the drug was chronically used or not (but only assumed so) and no patient education or dosing information was given by them.

On the whole, prescription medications were made available and when asked by name, no instructions were given at all. It was rather surprising and concerning to find that some pharmacists debated; all drugs available in retail pharmacies. Health and made available in every pharmacy around the country. Shockingly some pharmacists mentioned that antibiotics are harmless to patients, undermining the degree of pharmacy and knowledge of a pharmacist, and this represents the danger implied to society, requiring an urgent reconsideration of the person behind the counter. In contrast, the same pharmacists claimed that they have enough knowledge to recommend the appropriate drug for the patient's illness, which is rather contradicting. It is strictly prohibited for the pharmacist to dispense any drug without a medical prescription signed by a licensed. Although this study has been conducted in Karachi, it serves as good reference for the remaining cities in the country. This is not the first study that explores

pharmacist attitudes, and their self-reported behavior toward dispensing drugs (with no prescription); unfortunately results follow the last decade’s disappointing trend smoothly. This study does not underestimate the pharmacist’s role in the society, but it rather gives a full image of the pharmacist’s demographics, knowledge of non-OTC drugs and draws a clear image of their attitude toward dispensing. Reasons given were quite disreputable requiring an urgent reevaluation of who should be qualified to dispense such medications, and what medications should be dispensed. The study also revealed a negative attitude of most pharmacists to this type of study, who saw that such studies are a waste of time. They mentioned further that the country is a third world country.

Conclusion

The study confirmed that pharmacists are dispensing psychoactive agents without prescription and not only violating the law, which is leading to a profound malpractice in retail pharmacies around the city but also contribute toward the factors which leads to adverse drug effects. Consequently, regulations should be reviewed and structured educational campaigns should be organized for awareness of both pharmacists and general public. The antipsychotics list should be generated, implemented, and monitored by high authorities.

Figure 1: Use of psychoactive agents

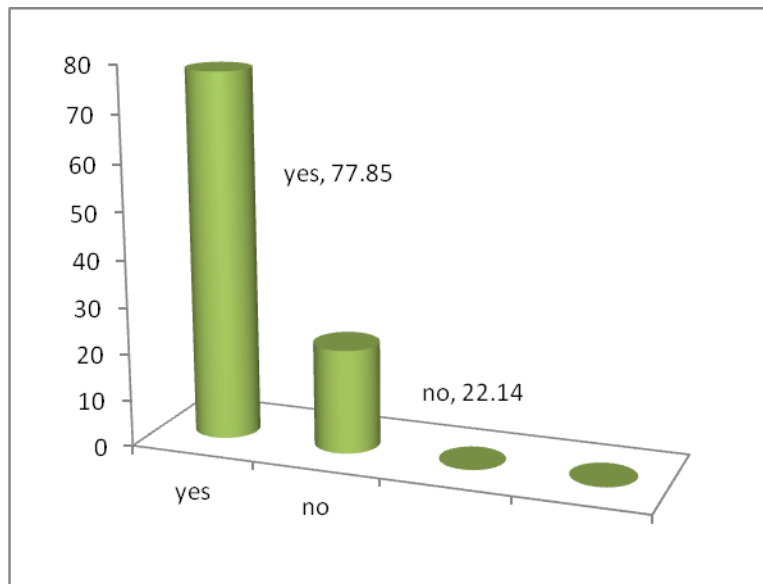


Figure 2: Use of psychoactive agents with or without consultation

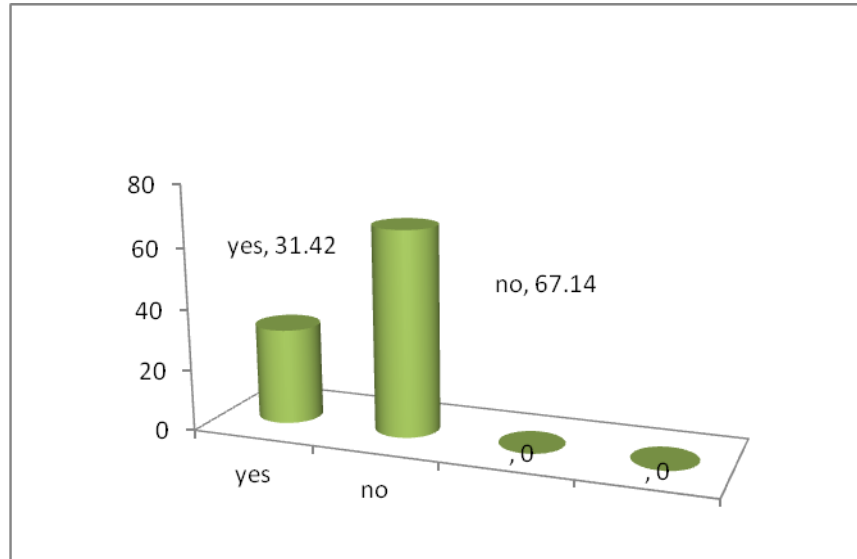


Figure 3: Use of psychoactive agents without prescription

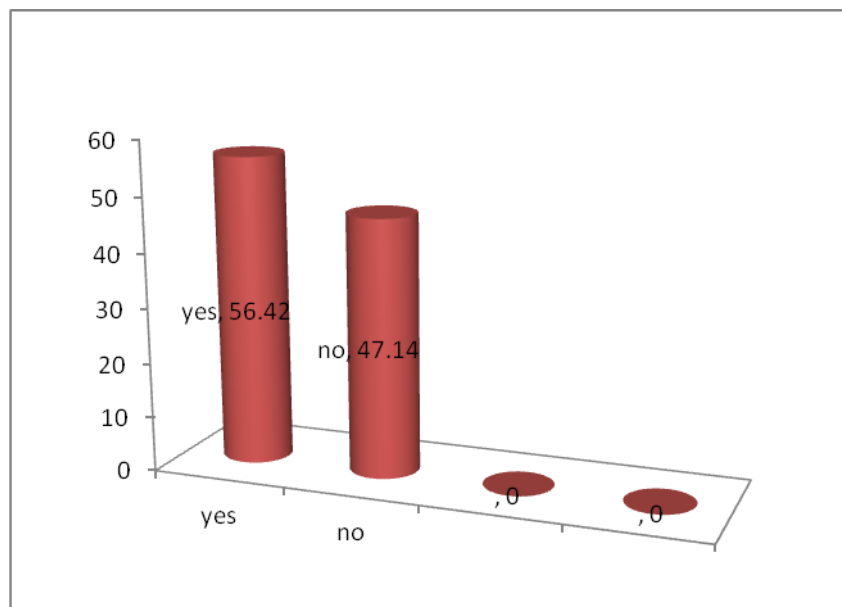
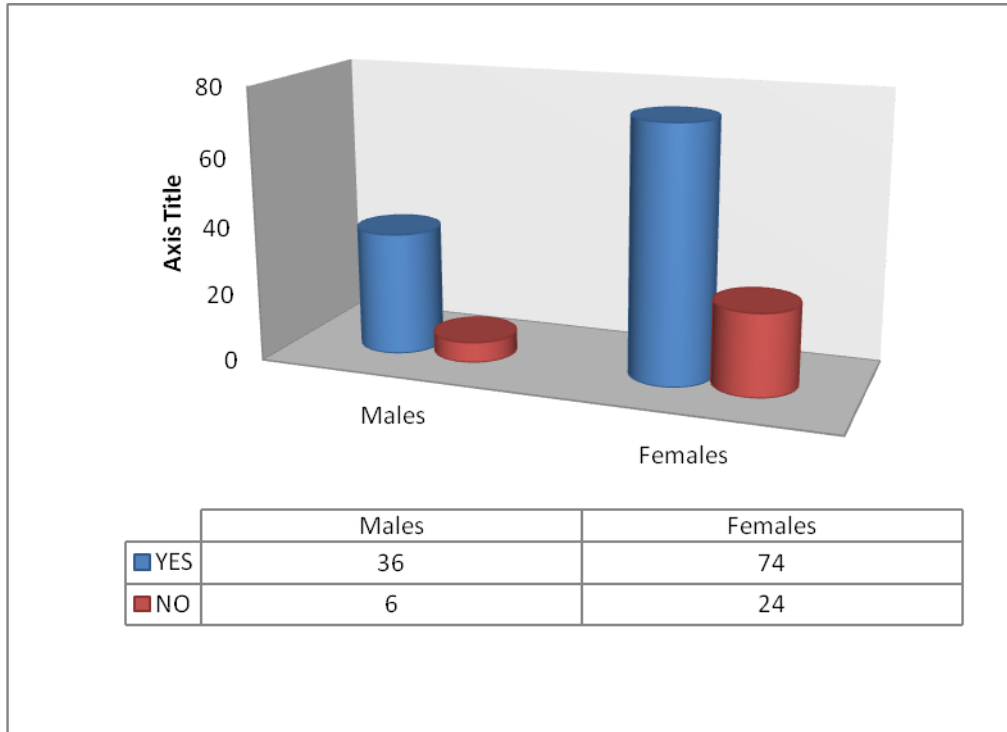


Figure 4 : Use of psychoactive agents in different gender



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2. Kogut SJ, Yam F, Dufresne R. Prescribing of antipsychotic medication in a medicaid population: use of polytherapy and off-label dosages. *J Manag Care Pharm.* 2005 Jan-Feb;11(1):17-24.